



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 10

1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 155  
Seattle, WA 98101-3123

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL  
ADMINISTRATOR

NOV - 2 2018

Honorable Chairman Rodney Cawston  
Office of the Chairman, Colville Business Council  
The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation  
P.O. Box 150  
Nespelem, Washington 99155

Dear Chairman Cawston:

I appreciated the opportunity to meet with you in August while visiting the Upper Columbia River Site, including the Deadman's Eddy Bar on the Colville Indian Reservation. Thank you to you, other members of the Council, and your staff for the warm hospitality and important information you shared with us during that visit. My technical team and I appreciate the significance of addressing contamination in the river upstream of our project. The Region will continue to raise the issue of slag in the Canadian reaches of the Columbia River with the Canadian officials.

Regarding our discussion of an early action at Deadman's Eddy Bar, which is in Operable Unit 1 of the Upper Columbia River Site, I understand your frustration regarding the length of time it has taken to complete the ecological risk assessment and address the slag discharged to the river. Unfortunately, there remain some uncertainties that the EPA must address before initiating an action to remove slag from the river. One issue is the risk of recontamination once slag materials are removed from the river.

Additionally, the EPA is overseeing the Phase III sediment studies being conducted by Teck American Inc. The Phase III studies include sediment mapping to identify slag deposits, toxicity testing of the deposits, and toxicity identification evaluations (TIEs). The TIEs are intended to clearly determine whether observed toxicity in laboratory bioassays can be attributed to metals associated with slag. Depending on the outcome of the Phase III studies, a treatability study and pilot test may be needed to identify potential remedial technologies to address risks posed to benthic organisms by metals in slag and pore water along beaches and in subaqueous sediment. The goal of this pilot would be to expedite the evaluation of remedies to address slag in the river.

The EPA looks forward to our continued collaboration to address the Upper Columbia River Site and we recognize the importance of this unique river and its relationship to the Colville Tribe. Thank you again for your continued work and dedication to this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Hladick", is positioned above the printed name.

Chris Hladick  
Regional Administrator

cc: Ms. Cindy Marchand, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, CERCLA Coordinator